

# PASSPORT To Health

## Provider Newsletter

October-December 2001

Keeping Providers Informed

### Inside this issue:

Recognizing Suicide Signs	1
Warning Signs	1
New Medicaid Coverage	2
PASSPORT Approval and Referral for Out-of-State Hospital Services	2
PCP Authorization Needed for Dental Surgery	3
In the Spotlight: Dr. John Trauscht	3
PASSPORT Update and Reminders	3
Client Comments	4
Alcohol Evaluation Website Helpful	4

## Recognizing Suicide Signs

For the past 15 years, Montana has ranked either second or third nationally in suicide rates. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between 1996 and 1998, Montana averaged 19.57 suicides per 100,000 people, just behind Nevada (22.96) and Alaska (21.45). From 1989 to 1998, Montana averaged 167 suicides per year.

Suicide is the second or third leading cause of death for adolescents 15 to 19 years old. Teen suicide rates have tripled nationally since 1970. For ages 10-14, suicide rates have increased by 128% since 1980.

Medical providers can help prevent suicide by knowing the symptoms of depression and other presuicidal behaviors.

Appropriate care for suicidal patients depends on their provider's knowledge, skill, comfort with the topic, and ready access to appropriate community resources.

All patients with suicidal symptoms should know that their pleas for assistance are heard and that medical providers are willing to serve as advocates to help resolve the crisis.

The Critical Illness and Trauma Foundation in Bozeman is an excellent source of information about suicide. You can contact them at 406-585-2659 or email them at [info@citmt.org](mailto:info@citmt.org).



### WARNING SIGNS

1. Talking about suicide
2. Making statements about feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless
3. A deepening depression
4. Preoccupation with death
5. Taking unnecessary risks or exhibiting self-destructive behavior
6. Out of character behavior
7. A loss of interest in the things one cares about
8. Visiting or calling people one cares about
9. Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order
10. Giving prized possessions away

*A specific warning sign for providers to recognize is increased utilization of provider visits by elderly clients.*

### MONTANA MEDICAID MANAGED CARE as of September 14, 2001

No. of PASSPORT Clients—48,018

No. of Clients 21 and older —14,401

No. of Clients 20 and younger —33,617

No. of PASSPORT Providers— 845

No. of MT PASSPORT Counties —53



Keeping Providers Informed  
1-800-480-6823

## New Medicaid Coverage for Breast & Cervical Cancer Patients

Effective July 1, 2001, Montana law provides for a new Medicaid eligibility group that will receive Basic Medicaid.

This Medicaid benefit will provide the flexibility to ensure that women who are screened through the Montana Breast and Cervical Health Program (MBCHP) and diagnosed with breast and/or cervical cancer or a pre-cancerous condition will get the help they need to pay for treatment.

### To be eligible for Medicaid coverage through the MBCCTP:

- The woman must be screened through MBCHP and have a diagnosis of breast and/or cervical cancer or a

pre-cancerous condition.

- The woman can not have creditable insurance or other coverage to pay for treatment.
- The woman must be less than 65 years of age.

Coverage will end when the patient has completed the cancer treatment, as determined by the medical service provider, or turns 65 years of age.

Women covered through this new eligibility group must participate in the PASSPORT to Health Program and have a primary care provider to access most services. Primary care providers must make referrals to specialists if necessary.

For information regarding screening through the

Montana Breast and Cervical Health Program, please call 1-888-803-9343.

For information regarding this new eligibility group contact:

Sue Miller,  
Program Manager  
Montana

Breast and Cervical Health Program  
406-444-3624

### OR

Kathe Quittenton, Family Medicaid Policy Specialist  
Human and Community Services Division  
406-444-9022.



## PASSPORT Approval and Referral for Out-of-State Hospital Services

Effective March 1, 2001 Medicaid began requiring prior authorization for out-of-state outpatient hospital services from Mountain-Pacific Quality Health Foundation (the Foundation). In addition, many of these services require approval by the patient's PASSPORT PCP. This is the same requirement that out-of-state inpatient hospital services have had for many years. This means that the out-of-state hospital providers had to make two phone calls for authorization prior to

providing services.

In an effort to decrease the phone calls they must make, and the confusion many providers expressed, the procedure was changed effective August 2001. An out-of-state provider must still call the Foundation for prior approval. However, when the Foundation is conducting the medical necessity review they will contact the PCP and request approval for the out-of-state hospital service. This approval will encompass all services during the course of treatment for the out-of-state

procedure. In other words, if the patient is receiving services from a physician and a physical therapist the approval will encompass both services. If the PCP gives the approval the Foundation will then give it to the out-of-state hospital provider with instructions to use it when billing.

This procedure should decrease the number of calls the out-of-state hospital provider must make while maintaining the PCPs right and responsibility to provide a "medical home" for the client.

*The Foundation will contact the PCP and request approval for the out-of-state hospital service.*

## PCP Authorization Needed for Dental Surgery

Dentists do not need PASSPORT authorization to perform dental services on Medicaid PASSPORT clients.

Sometimes a dental procedure needs to take place in a hospital or surgical center. The dentist does not need PASSPORT authorization for his/her services; however, the facility where the dental procedure is taking place *does* need PASSPORT authorization to get paid for their services.

Since the dentist does not need a referral the first time the PCP knows of the dental service may be when the facility calls for the referral. This can be an awkward position for the PCP and the facility. It is important remember that

the facility will not get paid without the referral. It is also important to remember that choosing to grant, or not to grant, PCP approval is up to the discretion of the PASSPORT provider.

As with most services they provide, facilities need to make sure they get PASSPORT authorization or their claims will be denied. Facilities providing dental services are not exempt from this policy.



## In the Spotlight: Dr. John Trauscht

Dr. John Trauscht is our featured PERC member this quarter. He has been a valued member of Montana's Peer Educational Review Committee (PERC) since the inception of the PASSPORT To Health Program.

The PERC committee is a six member panel of PASSPORT providers who help develop and decide policy and clinical issues for Medicaid's PASSPORT To Health Program.

Dr. John Trauscht arrived in Missoula in 1981 and continues to practice the medicine of oncology, hematology, and internal medicine. Before coming to Montana he practiced in Michigan, and New Mexico.

He is a member of the American College of Physicians, American Society of Internal Medicine, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the Southwest Oncology Group. He is also an Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA. Dr. Trauscht had the honor of being listed in *Best Doctors in America*, 1996-1997.

Thank you Dr. Trauscht for attending the early morning PERC meetings, for all your work and commitment to Medicaid's PASSPORT To Health Program, and to improving the health of Montanans!

*Meet Dr. John Trauscht—listed as being one of the best doctors in America.*

## PASSPORT Update and Reminders

- Closing your practice for a few days? Please remember the message on your answering machine or the information supplied by your answering service must give Medicaid clients directions on how to access care in your absence. The Medicaid client must be able to speak with a live voice within two phone calls. Montana Health Choices audits the providers 24-hour phone numbers to make sure PASSPORT providers are in compliance with 24-hour coverage.
- Do you suspect a Medicaid PASSPORT client might be drug seeking? Call the Surveillance/Utilization Review Unit at 406-444-3993 to report your suspicions. An investigation on the client's use will begin.
- Remember to get PASSPORT authorizations *before* you treat a client.

## Client Comments

Congratulations to the providers below who received raves from their Medicaid PASSPORT clients!

U I am very happy with my health choice. Dr. Ward (Havre, MT) is an excellent doctor and his nurses are fantastic. They always have time for me and answer all my questions and concerns. They should be commended.

U I have a wonderful and extremely caring doctor, Dr. Elton Adams (Great Falls, MT) and his nurse Susan. My needs are very complicated and he has done a fantastic job on keeping abreast of my needs. I couldn't ask for a better doctor!

U I wouldn't consider changing my healthcare provider. I am very happy and satisfied and really like Dr. Michael Lefever (Butte, MT).

U Dr. Burkholder (Helena, MT) is fabulous. He is absolutely caring, listens very well, and takes time.



## Alcohol Evaluation Web Site Helpful

A new Internet web site that evaluates the alcohol use patterns of adults and provides feedback is being called an excellent personal assessment tool by staff in the Montana Chemical Dependency Bureau.

The Boston University School of Public Health launched the web site this spring. The site, [www.alcoholscreening.org](http://www.alcoholscreening.org) -- asks 12 questions about alcohol use and takes a few minutes to complete before offering an appraisal. Responses are confidential and non-intrusive.

Employees at the Montana Chemical Dependency Bureau, part of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, encourage residents to

explore information on the site regardless of whether they think they or an acquaintance may have a drinking problem.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for anyone wondering if their own drinking might be a problem to privately do their own screening test," said Phyllis

MacMillan of the Department of Public Health and Human Services. "This self assessment does not diagnose drinking problems, but screens for possible alcohol abuse or addiction."

Ken Mordan, a State Chemical Dependency Program Officer, said he was impressed with the amount of

information available once the test is complete. "I was able to access the name, address and phone number of local Montana state-approved chemical dependency programs for different locations," he said. "This is a real plus."

Mordan said the site could also be a resource for professional people and businesses to seek help for employees, as well as to educate themselves.

For more information about the site, contact Anara Guard in Boston at 617-437-1500 or [anara@jointogether.org](mailto:anara@jointogether.org).



*The Alcohol Evaluation Web Site is a resource for people to seek help and educate themselves on alcohol use.*